

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1995

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to license exemptions for certain specialized, nonpowered vehicle equipment.

Brief Description: Exempting converter gear and tow dollies from licensing.

Sponsor(s): Representatives R. Fisher, Jones, Wood, R. Meyers, Horn, Wilson, Mielke and Miller.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Transportation, February 27, 1991, DP;
Passed House, March 13, 1991, 97-0;
Passed Legislature, 97-0.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION**

Majority Report: *Do pass.* Signed by 25 members:
Representatives R. Fisher, Chair; R. Meyers, Vice Chair;
Betrozoff, Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Assistant
Ranking Minority Member; Basich; Cantwell; Cooper; Day;
G. Fisher; Forner; Haugen; Heavey; Horn; P. Johnson; Jones;
Kremen; Mitchell; Nelson; Orr; Prentice; Prince; Schmidt;
Wilson; Wood; and Zellinsky.

Staff: Mary McLaughlin (786-7309).

Background: Converter gear is used to (1) convert a semitrailer to a full trailer, (2) convert a two-axle truck to a three or more axle truck, or (3) increase the number of axles on a vehicle. A tow dolly is used to tow a motor vehicle behind another motor vehicle, i.e., a motor home towing a passenger car.

Most states do not require converter gear and tow dollies to be licensed as the structure being converted, a truck, tractor or trailer, bears the vehicle license. Annual licensing is optional in Washington state. If the equipment is being used to convert a unit, a license is not required. However, if the equipment is being pulled "empty" behind a vehicle, it is considered to be a "trailer" and annual registration, \$36 plus motor vehicle excise tax (MVET), or a trip permit, \$10 for three days, is required. If the

converter gear is frequently pulled as a trailer, the carrier usually opts for annual registration.

The state of California is the only state under the International Registration Plan (IRP) that requires annual licensing of converter gear. Under the IRP, the license fee for converter gear is prorated for Washington-based carriers operating in California. Other IRP-member states do not collect California's converter gear license fees on behalf of their base-state carriers. The carriers are directly responsible for licensing their converter gear in California.

Summary of Bill: Converter gear and tow bars are exempt from Washington's vehicle registration and licensing requirements. Converter gears are no longer considered apportioned vehicles for the purposes of prorate.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Most states do not require converter gear to be licensed.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Marty Sangster, Washington Trucking Association.